

# A legacy of spelling changes

By DeAnna Putnam  
STAFF WRITER

Duxbury's name is the result of a legacy of spelling changes. Two centuries passed before the version we now use finally took hold, as the Old English language of New England settlers gave way to a new and improved American spin on the mother tongue.

Ready for the breakdown? Here goes...

The town originally started out as "Ducksborrow," which morphed into "Duxborrow," and from there it was changed to "Duxbury."

But wait! "Duxbury" only lasted for a couple of decades and then was traded in for "Duxboro," until residents apparently decided that they really like "Duxbury" after all, and thus the name has remained for more than 170 years.

Amidst a flurry of letter trade-offs (where the "ck" was upgraded to the more compact "x," and the "w" was dropped for the simpler "o" and then the more fashionable "y,") no one is will-

ing to say for certain how the town got its name to begin with.

But maybe one doesn't need to look beyond the obvious.

The original name "Ducksborrow" is pretty self explanatory - Duxbury was a favorite hangout for ducks. Those who find this explanation too easy, or lacking in nobility, will point to various history books that try to link the name to Captain Myles Standish, saying that the town was named in honor of the Standish family who resided in the township of Duxbury in Lancashire, England. However, this is considered a defunct theory, because it does not coincide with Standish's own account of his family tree, as he chooses to connect himself with a different Standish family from a different English town.

However, naming a town after ducks may not be simplistic or ignoble at all.

The fact that wildlife chose Duxbury's bay over other options is a worthy thing to note. The town's oceanfront is among the best on the

South Shore and down the arm of the Cape. While other towns have been forced to close their waterfront to shellfish harvesting and sometimes even to swimming because of coastal pollution, Duxbury has never had this problem. The bay loses almost two-thirds of its water with every tide, and such flushing keeps the water clean and free from bacteria buildup.

Apparently, the ducks recognized a good piece of property when they saw it, and quite frankly, the ducks were right.

## Duxbury Town Facts

### Vital Statistics

Bordered by Pembroke on the west, Marshfield on the north, Kingston on the south and the Atlantic Ocean on the east and southeast.

Duxbury is 33 miles south of Boston and 246 miles from New York City.

Total Area: 37.63 square miles

Land Area: 23.76 square miles

Population: 13,895 (1990)

Year Incorporated: 1637

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**Form of Government**  
Board of Selectmen  
Town Manager  
Open Town Meeting

**Registered Voters** (Oct. 6, 1998)  
Total Registered: 9,795  
Democrats: 1,867  
Republicans: 2,459  
Other Parties: 20  
Unenrolled: 5,449

**Households**  
1980: 3,649  
1990: 4,625  
% change: 26.7  
(Source: 1990 U.S. Census)  
Median Household Income: \$63,878  
State Rank: 15  
% of State Average: 172.9  
Per Capita Income: \$24,770  
State Rank: 31  
% of State Average: 143.8

**Transportation:**  
Major Highways State Routes 3, 3A, 14, 53 and 139.  
Rail  
Commuter Rail Service to Boston from stations in Kingston and South Hanson.  
Bus  
Duxbury is a member of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). The Plymouth and Brockton Street Railway Company provides commuter service to Boston. Commuter boat service to Boston from Hingham; Marshfield Airport, a General Aviation (GA) facility.

**Health Facilities**  
Assisted Living: Allerton House, 290 Kings Town Way, 585-7136  
Long Term Care: Bay Path at Duxbury, 308 Kings Town Way, 585-5561; Duxbury House Nursing Home, 298

Kings Town Way, 585-2397  
Hospitals

**Utilities**  
Cable: Adelphia Cable Communications, (508) 747-3300  
Electric: Commonwealth Electric Co. (800) 642-7000  
Gas: Bay State Gas Company (800) 242-0220  
Sewer: None  
Water Department: 934-1103

Local Cable Access:  
Duxbury Community Television, St. George Street, 934-7035  
Post Offices: Main Post Office, 68 Depot St., 934-5551; Snug Harbor Station, 445 Washington St., 934-2262  
Recycling: Cardboard, jars and bottles, magazines, metal cans, mixed paper, newspapers, telephone books, plastics 1 and 2, scrap metal, some yard waste, car batteries, tires, books, furniture, used clothing.  
Mayflower Street transfer station: 934-0255

**Officials**  
Elected  
U.S. Senators  
Edward M. Kennedy: 565-3170  
John F. Kerry: 565-8519  
U.S. Congressman  
William D. Delahunt: 770-3700  
State Senator  
Robert L. Hedlund: 722-1646  
State Representative  
Francis L. Marini: 722-2100  
Selectmen  
Andre P. Martecchini,  
Margaret M. Kearney, John J. Tuffy  
Town Clerk  
Nancy Oates: 934-1131  
School Committee  
Carol L. Love, Ken McCarthy, Linda J. Smith,

Betsy Sullivan, David A. Tenney  
Appointed  
Town Manager  
Rocco Longo: 934-1108  
Police Chief  
Acting Chief Donald Sjostedt: 934-5656  
Fire Chief  
William Harriman: 934-5693  
Harbormaster  
Donald Beers: 934-2866

**Public Schools**  
Superintendent  
Eileen Williams, 130 St. George St., 934-7600  
Duxbury High School, grades 9-12, Principal Wayne Ogden, 130 St. George St., 934-7650  
Duxbury Middle School, grades 5-8, Principal Joellen Rando, St. George St., 934-7640  
Alden Elementary School,

grades 3-4, Alden St., 934-7630  
Chandler School, grades K-2, Principal Deborah Zetterberg, Chandler St., 934-7680

**Emergency Services**  
Police: 911  
Fire: 911  
Ambulance: 911  
Jordan Hospital: (508) 746-2000  
South Shore Hospital (617) 340-8000  
Please note that 911 lines are for emergency only. Non-emergency numbers for police and fire are listed below.  
Police  
Business/Non-emergency: 934-5656; 934-5657  
Fire  
Business/Non-Emergency: 934-5693

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# Duxbury

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A Duxbury bog is wet harvested for the season.

STAFF PHOTO/DOUG MCFADD